Numb. 36.

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *Britiſh* Trade, &c.

From Thurſday, Auguſt 13. to Saturday, Auguſt 15. 1713.

The Mercator *obliged to diſpute not with Mens Reaſon, but with their Paſſions.*

The Queſtion before us very ſhort, and needs not ſo many Circumlocutions, only to know whether the French *Trade be to our Advantage or no.*

The Mercator *brings Proof of the Fact on one ſide; the Oppoſers, falſe Schemes on the other.*

The Matter ought to be brought to the Trial by the Cuſtom-houſe Books.

The Abſurdity of asking what Woollen Manufactures were carried into Dunkirk *by the 218 Ships? when they know our Woollen Manufactures cannot be carried thither for want of the Treaty being made Effectual.*

THE Diſpute that the *MERCATOR* is engaged in about this Matter of Trade, ſeems to be not with Mens Reaſons but with their Paſſions; and therefore as the *MERCATOR* does not talk to Perſons, but labours to confute their Abſurdities, the Talk is more difficult.

We are obliged to explain the Doubts, and diſperſe the Miſts, which have been ſpread among the People, as far as Matters of Fact will do it, and as far as fair and plain Truth will undeceive People. But it is not the Buſineſs of this Paper to enter into all the Cavils of the Party, anſwer or return their ill Language: Our Buſineſs is to Undeceive the poor People, who they have Impoſed upon.

The grand Queſtion before us is, Whether the French Trade be profitable to us or no? If IT IS, it ought not to be refuſed; if IT IS NOT, it ought not to be accepted.

To prove that IT IS, the *MERCATOR* has ſhewn, by fair Accounts, 1. What it has been. 2. Why it is not ſo now, (viz.) becauſe of the high Duties and Prohibitions in France. 3. That the Treaty would have reſtored it, by taking thoſe high Duties off.

Againſt theſe plain Things they brought a fallacious SCHEME, pretending thereby to prove, the French Trade was to our Loſs: This SCHEME has been detected and expoſed, and the Frauds of it has been ſo notorious, that honeſt Men muſt be aſham'd of it; yet, without regard to all that, it is ſtill handed about as Matter of Fact. They, who will ſtill be deceived after ſo much Demonſtration, muſt remain in their Deluſion. *Si populus vult decipi decipiatur.*

A Letter directed to the Authors of the *MERCATOR*, mentions ſeveral Authors who he ſays have always told us, that we carried on the French Trade to our great Loſs.

As an Anſwer to this Letter, and all Objectors of that kind, the *MERCATOR* lays this down for a Rule, and wiſhes it might be a ſtanding Law for this Diſpute over the whole Nation: It is to no purpoſe to tell us, what this or that Man ſays, and what is or has been the Opinion of the People; but how ſtands the Matter of Fact? What do they prove of all they ſay?

If they have any Schemes, any Copies of Imports and Exports, why do they not produce them, that they may be Examined, and that it may appear on both ſides, whether they are true or falſe? And why do they venture to be warm and abuſive till they have tried the Validity of what they have offered to the World? and till they know, whether what they aſſert will ſtand the Teſt? and, that they ſhall not be made aſhamed by being found in the wrong? This is ſo fair an Offer, and ſo ſhort a Tryal of Truth, that if the *MERCATOR* can challenge them all to come to the Teſt of Truth, and they dare not come, the *MERCATOR* muſt have the better of them, and they muſt quit their Argument. If the *MERCATOR*'s Schemes are falſe, and can be diſproved, why is it not done?

Let

Let the impartial Readers of these things judge between the *MERCATOR* and these Men. Are not the Custom-house Books open? Have not both Sides given Schemes, said to be taken from those Books? We have proved theirs to be false; we have challenged them to detect ours in any one Article; what can be more to any reasonable Man's Satisfaction?

To what Purpose do these Men beat the Bush, and dance in a Circle! The Custom-house is a Record of these Things, and may be referr'd to, even back to 1664, and farther if they please. Let them join Issue with us, and take a fair, just, attested Account; only let them bring no FALSE SCHEMES, made up to delude the World: and let them take a Medium of the Trade where they please, where the Circumstances are equal, and let us see, who is right, and who wrong, and whether they can make out what they say by Matter of Fact, or no.

This is a very strange thing, that these Men say we lose above a Million per Annum by the French Trade, and the *MERCATOR* says, we gain by the French Trade a very great Sum; and here is the exact Account of the Importations and Exportations on both Sides to be had at the Custom-House, and yet the Nation cannot be set to rights in this Matter.

Is this a Difficulty to puzzle a Nation with! Why is not the Truth on both Sides enquired into? Why is it not brought to a Certainty? The *MERCATOR* appeals to the Custom-House Books; and the Custom-House Books must be right, and may be searched: Now these Men dare not do it, but stand and affirm without Book, and demand to be believed upon their own Words against Demonstration, and when they find the true Abstract of the Custom-House Books was against them, they forge a false one; when the Falsities of that forged SCHEME are detected, they tell us such a one said so, and such Men believe so.

What need has Britain to take what such or such a Man said; search the BOOKS; what Authors have said may be false, what the Books say must be true. These Men would never have exposed themselves so far, as to publish a scandalous forged SCHEME for an Account, if the true Account had been in their favour.

Let them tell us, Why did they omit all the Exportations of Foreign Goods, if they had not known it would have been against them? Are not our Re-exported Goods a very great Branch of our Trade? Have we not Exported above Two hundred thousand Pounds to France a Year in East-India Goods only? Why were these all omitted?

Likewise in Fish, Why did the SCHEME wholly omit the Article of Fish Exported to France in that Year? Have we not Exported 15000 Barrels of Herrings to France in a Year, besides Salmon, Pilchards, and Whitefish?

Are not these evident Proofs, that these Men do neither Act honestly, or Argue fairly? The *MERCATOR* therefore thinks he very justly declines speaking to them, till they please to bring what they say to the Test, and try, by the proper Evidence of Fact, the Weight of what they alledge; and till they shall do so, they may mislead a few Ignorant People indeed: But they will Detect and Expose themselves to all Men of Reason, that weigh and enquire into the Nature of Things.

It was observed in one of the *MERCATORS*, that when the List of 218 Ships entering into Dunkirk in the short space of nine Months, should come to be seen in the Country, it would be surprizing to many People, who had been Imposed upon, to believe that we had little or no Trade to France.

And it has proved a Surprize to them indeed, and has opened the Eyes of many: But to close the Eyes of those People again, we are told some have the Folly to ask, *But what Woollen Manufactures did all those Ships carry in?* &c.

Tho' this is so gross a thing, that one would think it could have no ill Effect, and that it should rather Expose those, who ask it, yet, it seems, some are Ignorant enough to be taken with it.

But let such ask their Teachers again, How should any Woollen Manufactures be carryed, when the Treaty of Commerce has not been made Effectual? What is it the *MERCATOR* complains of, but that the Bill of Commerce having been delayed, the Trade is still shut up? that the Nation of France is ready and eager to take our Manufactures, but we have not thought fit to let them do it?

Are not all our Woollen Manufactures Prohibited in France? and is not the taking off these Prohibitions the very thing, that the *MERCATOR* is, and has been all along Arguing for? which Prohibitions and all the high Duties on the British Trade, the French are obliged by the Treaty of Commerce to take off, and to open a full Passage and Vent for our Manufactures thither, while the greatest part of our high Duties are to remain upon their Goods here, such as 50 l. per Ton on Brandy, 266 l. per Wey on Salt, 34 s. per l. weight upon Alamodes and Lustrings, 27 l. per Ton on Wines, and the like; and yet they pretend we cannot get by the Trade.

Had these Prohibitions been taken off, and the Quantities of Woollen Manufacture had been small that had gone into Dunkirk in all that time, then there had indeed been some Weight in their Question: But for Men to ask us what Quantity of Woollen Manufactures were entered at Dunkirk, where our Manufactures are Prohibited, needs nothing to Expose it, and the People that ask such a Question, but only to let the World see the Question it self.

None can blame the *MERCATOR* for passing over such People as these with Neglect: Let them Answer for their SCHEME, as was said in our last, and then more may be said to them.

ERRATA in the Last.

Col. 3. lin. 1. read *Woll-men with-held buying, the Manufacturers dismiss'd*, &c. lin. 53. for *former* read *Farmer*. Col. 4. lin. 2. for *are* read *have been*.

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